



**This month's edition of the Spotlight is dedicated solely to
Connecticut's Adoption Day 2023*

Our sincere gratitude to the Judicial Branch, especially the Judges in the Superior Courts for Juvenile Matters, who opened their courtrooms to our media partners across the state.

(Leslie Gomez)

Every child deserves the stability of a permanent home. Adoption is one special way that a family is formed.

November is celebrated as **National Adoption Month!** Look at the beautiful smiles of families ... Pure JOY.

With over 30 adoptions finalized on Friday November 17th, DCF will have completed more than 420 adoptions this calendar year 2023, in addition to reunifying almost 400 children and facilitating over 280 children achieving permanency through transfer of guardianship.

Thank you to **Governor Lamont** for remarks at an adoption hearing in New Haven. The Governor recalled how his own family history involves facilitating adoptions-- reflecting pride as a topic near and dear, "To Serenity and your sister, you've got a nice home... We love you," he told the family of two little girls whose bond had just been legally cemented.

Myrlande Alexis of Stratford said that she felt called to open her home to children in need. "Can you adopt me?" asked one special young lady, Jiji, during an emotional family meeting. The answer was "Yes" and a few years later, this 16-year-old became one of 46 teens adopted across the state this year. Read their story and hear about the special adoption day celebration!

"Beautifully real and perfect for each other" is the story of two brothers adopted by a woman from Maryland after being featured in the DCF Heart Gallery. Isaiah and Eli now have a permanent home - while maintaining contact with their birth family. "Go into this process for you and know that you're going to change a life and it's going to be beautiful," stated **Jenn Tripp** about her adoption journey.





Kataryna and Zoey are siblings adopted at different times by **Susan Poswinski** and **Prashanth Nallainathan**. As Susan spoke with emotion of fostering this sibling connection, she shared openly about the grief, sadness, and trauma experienced by birth parents. She stated, "Nobody wants to give up their child, and we know that." With a courtroom full of reporters, DCF staff and family members, legal permanency was finalized for Kataryna. "This is probably our favorite day of the whole court calendar year," said Juvenile Matters **Judge Bernadette Conway**. Watch the family here: [30 children adopted at Connecticut's Adoption Day](#)

Listen to New Haven SWS **Rodney Moore** and his family describe the adoption process leading up to two-year-old Ju Ju's legal permanency in **Judge Sharon Skyers'** courtroom. Rodney's professional role brings a unique perspective to the work as now a kinship adoptive parent: [A Connecticut Family's Joy of Adoption](#)

"Best day ever," is how **Jessica Villanueva** described adoption day with her son, 6-month-old Jeziah. After being exposed to multiple substances in utero, Jeziah needed all the constant love, affection and attention Jessica and community partners could offer. See Jeziah now as he took part in his special day: [Baby welcomed into family during National Adoption Month](#)



Jessica Urban officially adopted 13-year-old Autumn and for **Judge Jason Lobo**, it was a great day in his courtroom. "I think it's really a big stereotype, that teenage children are going to have behavioral issues," Jessica stated while emphasizing the need to continue promoting adoption for children all ages: [All smiles in court at New Harford mother adopts teenage girl on CT Adoption Day](#)



Biological brothers Kol and Jaxon will grow up the rest of their life together after being formally adopted by **Andis and Bayla Arietta** during a ceremony in Middletown. "These boys love each other so much. The first person they want to see in the morning is each other," said Andis. See more of this family here: [Brothers adopted together during National Adoption Month](#)

KUDOS also to the DCF Staff, Assistant Attorneys General, court personnel, attorneys for the minor children, CAFAF liaisons, service providers and community collaborators who have all worked tirelessly to support families we collectively serve.

Ongoing support is available for families after adoption, or guardianship is transferred. The **UCONN Health Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)** provides post-adoption support, including assessment, education, brief counseling, and referral services to adoptive families and to families formed through guardianship. Information about AAP can be obtained by visiting the Adoption Assistance Program website, by calling **(877) 679-1961** or by e-mail at **aap@uchc.edu**



Children with complex needs, sibling groups, and teens or young people identifying as LGBTQIA+, continue to be targeted groups requiring special attention to find permanent homes. For more information go to **CTFosters.com** or call **1-888-KID-HERO** & KidHero@cafafct.org